

and myself.

I thought that the opportunity might be used to settle - as far as it can be settled - the nomenclature of the plants now known to botanists but the more we have looked into the matter - especially with reference to the changes consequent on the adoption of the Genera Pl. as the basis of the work - the heavier & more cumbersome the task has appeared. The view we now take is that the new Stenkel should be simply an Index of the existing literature of botany so far as the names of plants are concerned and that the definitive decision as to what the name ought to be in doubtful cases must be left to the monographers of the future.

With reference therefore to genera which have been thrown together

^{London}
10 Southwell Gardens S W

5 March

My dear Dr Gray - I must not any longer delay thanking you for your kind letter & the valuable and important paper which accompanied it - I lent this on receiving it to Dyer and have been unable to get it back from him - he being at present overpowered with work and at the same time much occupied and anxious about his wife's health - She has been for some time in a condition that causes much uneasiness to all her friends the more so perhaps that the medical men find it so hard to discover any definite cause for the weakening of all the

functions - and reduction of
strength -

I do not know that from a
purely selfish point of view
I should be glad or sorry that
the fates may possibly keep
you and Mrs Gray in New
England this summer - It
seemed only too good fortune
for me to have the chance
of meeting you in the West
but on the other hand the
prospect of finding the support
& countenance of such kind
friends may make the whole
difference as to my wife's undertaking
to cross the Atlantic - As you
know there is some chance
though an uncertain one

of the Hookers also making the
same expedition -

Will you kindly let me know
where Mr Greene now is - If I
should be able to make a run
to the far West I should like
to meet him & shall write to
him in any case - A postcard
will give the needful address.

I think that I should willingly
subscribe to everything in your paper
but when I get it back I shall
have more to say which I
reserve I may however
at once tell you that my views
as to the New Standard have been
considerably modified since I
first wrote & we are now here
pretty nearly of one mind on
the subject - Even Hooker though
with some reluctance having
come round to agree with Dyer

by B. & A. we think that
the course should be to give
~~the~~ supposing genus B to be
united to genus A.

B. (A species B & H. Gen. Pl. . . .)
x then insert ~~the~~ alphabetically
the species of B as hitherto
published - while as to such species
~~while~~ under ^A nospecific names
should be given save those which
have been already published
under that generic name.

We think however that where
the authors of the Gen. Pl.
have specifically asserted that
a given plant should rank
as a species of a given genus
even though they have not printed
the two names together

the implication is so complete
that they ought to be quoted.

To take the last plant that I
was examining - *Heinzelia lythroides*
of N ab E in Flor. Bras. Benthams
distinctly asserts after examination
that it cannot be separated from
Chectothylax & in such a case

I think that we should print
under the latter genus

C. lythroides B & H.

Not to lose another part I
close with our kindest greetings
to Mrs Gray & yourself

Very sincerely yours

John Ball

P.S. The staff at Kew is very fully occupied
& besides Oliver is rather apt to take peculiar views
on matters of detail to which he clings very
fast & Baker who has an immense capacity
is not very fit for deciding questions of minute
detail requiring patient investigation - In
practice a load of work which the more
one looks into it the larger it seems would
be thrown on Hooker - and it is just the
sort of work for which he is least fitted -
To require him to decide the dozens of
doubtful questions arising in the case of
each large genus would lead to immense
worry & expenditure of time & patience
& when all was done the work would be
far from perfect as you doubtless
have observed that he has made a
good many mistakes on points of
detail of this nature -

more on this subject in my next

JM